

EXHIBIT 2  
DATE 3-20-07  
HB 677

Boys & Girls Club of Richland County  
PO Box 416  
Sidney, MT 59270

March 19, 2007

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of Richland County we would like to offer our support for the HB 677.

The Montana Boys & Girls Clubs movement serves more than 22,000 youth statewide through membership, collaboration and community outreach. HB 677 will allow clubs access to funding through the Montana Board of Crime Control that would assist with the quality prevention programs already in place at our club.

With your help, we will continue to build upon our successes and touch the lives of Montana boys and girls. We have and will continue to make a difference in helping to turn around the lives of these youth. Together, we will continue to break new ground and reach out to at-risk youth in non-traditional ways each and every day.

Your support HB 677 to Fund After School Programs is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

**Sarah Sifers**

**Executive Director**

**Boys & Girls Club of Richland County**

# **SNAPSHOT**

The **MISSION** of Montana Boys & Girls Clubs is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Montana Boys and Girls Clubs go above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to commitment to youth. **SERVING 22,000 KIDS** statewide, Montana clubs strive passionately to provide for kids and keep them engaged in positive activities in an enriched environment surrounded by positive and supportive role models.

In the areas of membership **RECRUITMENT** and **RETENTION**, Montana Boys and Girls Clubs currently address the needs of the youth who "need us most" through a variety of services. Some of our clubs provide transportation to and from club sites while others provide special camps during school breaks including Christmas, Spring and Summer. There is a free recording studio and weekend concert series for teens in Missoula and the Reach Out for Youth program, MSU Kids Fest and Community Health Fair in Bozeman. Lights on Afterschool and BGC Day for Kids are often used tools for recruitment and our Fort Peck Clubs give free membership to all children graduating from Head Start to Kindergarten.

**Member TENURE** varies around the state. Kalispell, Bozeman, Fort Peck Reservation, Red Lodge clubs all boast an average of 3 years per child. Young members who attend the BGC of the Crow Reservation usually do so for 4 years. Missoula youth 5-10 attend regularly for up to 4 years while tweens and teens hang around for 2. Glendive, Cut Bank, Sidney, Havre, Great Falls, Lewistown, Billings and the Flathead clubs average 2 years per member and Northern Cheyenne Reservation youth usually average 5.5 years at the club!

*-Across the state, teens involved with \*Keystone Club and tweens enrolled in \*Torch Club take advantage of culture-rich field trips in and around the region.*

Montana Boys and Girls Clubs promote an environment of **ACTIVE LEARNING** which gives youth opportunities to grow. *Required High Yield Learning Activities through the \*SMART Moves program keep kids engaged and help to retain knowledge from the school day.*

*-Many youth who come to Montana Boys & Girls Clubs at a young age tend to stay on as Jr. Staff in their teen years, continue to volunteer and keep in touch throughout the years.*

Montana Boys and Girls Clubs take pride in their strong commitment to **QUALITY**. Clubs provide a wide variety of diverse programming and concentrate on the five core areas on a weekly, daily and hourly basis.

**THE 5 CORE PROGRAM AREAS INCLUDE- CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH & LIFE SKILLS, THE ARTS & SPORTS, FITNESS & RECREATION.**

Montana Boys and Girls Clubs get creative when it comes to designing **PROGRAMMING** which is often specialized to integrate the culture of the community and surrounding areas.

*-Native American arts and culture is integrated into all of our reservation clubs but also throughout the state as each and every club serve an Indian population.*

Montana clubs **COLLABORTE** with other **COMMUNITY** organizations to ensure top programs for Montana youth. The list is long! Clubs work with Lions Clubs, Food Banks, Boy and Girl Scouts, Public Schools and Head Start; Church Groups, 4-H Groups and Rotary Clubs; local Law Enforcement, Tribes and Health Services; Parks and Recreation, Big Brothers Big Sisters and local Housing Services; Higher Education Institutions, RSVP and Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth; Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity and the Board of Crime Control; Partnership for Promise, Communities in Action and Relay for Life.

The Montana Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs has assessed the top **NEEDS** of our clubs and our results show a consistent message saying that additional resources are needed to enhance their programs. Clubs need to be able to offer their staff a Competitive Wage, they need better access to Transportation and they need funding for Staff Trainings either in or out of state. Some of our clubs need funding for Bigger Facilities to accommodate the growing need for out of school programming in their community in addition to Technology Upgrades.

*-Volunteers, Funding for Community Education and Access to the Legislature are among some other notable needs expressed by Montana clubs.*

"If we can at least teach our youth that what they do affects other people, we're accomplished a great deal. The kids need positive, consistent reinforcement in a safe atmosphere." – John Schnase, Boys and Girls Club of the Flathead Reservation

"For some children the Boys & Girls Club is simply a place to hang out, talking to friends and get homework, for others though it is the one place they can come and feel truly safe and accepted." – Virginia Villemez, Boys and Girls Club of Glacier County

"...She was a natural leader, a child who came from a very troubled, drug infested, and abusive home, yet she found a voice at the club and came into her own with a strength and grace that was admired by all."

– Miriam Lockman, Boys and Girls Club of Red Lodge

"...The club gives a good return on investment" – Valerie Limesand & Ed Williamson, Boys and Girls Club of Dawson County

**SMART Moves:** The SMART Moves (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) prevention/education program addresses the problems of drug and alcohol use and premature sexual activity. Based on proven techniques, the program uses a team approach involving Club staff, peer leaders, parents and community representatives. More than simply emphasizing a "Say No" message, the program teaches young people ages 6-15 how to say no by involving them in discussion and role-playing, practicing resistance and refusal skills, developing assertiveness, strengthening decision-making skills and analyzing media and peer influence. The ultimate goal: to promote abstinence from substance abuse and adolescent sexual involvement through the practice of responsible behavior.

**Keystone Club:** A small group leadership development clubs for young people ages 14-18. Keystoners elect officers, choose their own activities and plan and implement community service projects.

**Torch Club:** This small-group leadership development program is targeted to youngsters ages 11 to 13. Members elect officers and plan and implement their own activities and community service projects.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
MONTANA ALLIANCE

The purpose of this organization is to seek and secure charitable and educational funds to provide guidance and promote health, social, educational, vocational, character and cultural development of boys and girls served by the Boys & Girls Clubs in the state of Montana without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin; and to receive, invest and disburse funds and to hold property for the purposes of the corporation.